


**ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY  
HIGHGATE**

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHURCH  
BY  
ANDREW SANDERS**

**1975**





IN MEMORIAM

ERNEST FREDERICK CORNELIUS



## PREFACE

This brief history describes the long process of the building of a parish church, but it does not attempt to say much about the continuing life of a parish. That life, shifting and developing with generations, is the proper witness to the real purpose of a parish. The church building is merely its centre and its most visible expression. St. Augustine's is outwardly the achievement of three distinct phases in the art and worship of the Church in the last hundred years; its people are the guardians of an inherited fabric and the transmitters of both faith and fabric to the future.

The church as we see it is the creation of J.D. Sedding, J.H. Gibbons, and of the parish priests from the 1920's onwards. Sedding built for an age that believed Gothic to be the only Christian style; as an architect he used mediaeval forms with an ease and refinement that was exceptional. He had a deep understanding of what the revived glories of Gothic England could offer the Nineteenth Century, both religiously and aesthetically. His successor, J.H. Gibbons, built with equal confidence, but with something of an Edwardian freedom in his style; less self-consciously mediaeval, his architecture is a reflection of a new cultural and religious mood. Theirs is the actual fabric. Inside, St. Augustine's is a product more entirely so than most other London churches, of the revived taste of the 1920's for the Baroque. Italianate furnishings which would have appalled Sedding's generation harmonise resplendently with the Gothic of the 1880's. Thus two entirely different, even opposed, expressions of Christian feeling in art are brought together, not to clash, but to complement each other in a sense that is truly 'catholic'. From this very blending a modern critic, who may have little taste for any style except that of his own age, may find reason to wonder and to marvel. Alternatives, more expressive of newer fashions, are as transient as all fashions. St. Augustine's wholeness is such as can only be achieved gradually and carefully. Its achievement has been in the face of misfortune, but the church stands to triumphantly proclaim the living faith for which it was built.

This record is concerned with construction and with achievement, processes which, in any church, are continuous. It is dedicated to the memory of those who prayed, and those who built, and especially to the memory of E.F. Cornelius, for 57 years a faithful servant of St. Augustine's, who died suddenly while this was being prepared.  
*Requiescant in pace.*

A.L.S. 1975



IN the year 597 Augustine, a Roman monk, landed in Thanet and baptised Ethelbert of Kent at Canterbury so beginning the process of rendering England as a whole a vital part of the Christian Church. This short history is designed to celebrate a mere fifty years of a London church dedicated in honour of this same Augustine. Compared to most English parish churches St. Augustine's has but a short history, indeed, a cursory glance might suggest it is unworthy of even such a record as this. The church has, however, a building history as complex and as interesting as that of many mediaeval buildings, showing in its structure three distinct phases and styles, each expressive of the age which produced it. The completed church forms a rare and harmonious whole, the unity of which is a fitting tribute to the aspirations and labours of its founders, its architects, and its continuing succession of worshippers.

1

As a distinctive locality the history of the parish need only be traced back as far as the construction of the Archway which gives the area its name. In 1809 it was proposed that a tunnel should be excavated under the road between Highgate and Hornsey in order to relieve the difficult and muddy road which climbs the incline of Highgate Hill. Work commenced on this early 'by-pass', but in April 1812 the greater part of the tunnel collapsed and had to be replaced by a new bridge, a structure which endured until it was replaced by the present iron span in 1897. At the same time the now important road leading northwards from London was widened. Recent 'improvements' to the Archway Road have continued this process, exposing St. Augustine's, at times spectacularly, to the perpetual metropolitan traffic.

With an easier access provided by the cutting of the new road the southern and eastern parts of the village of Highgate expanded downhill to join London, growing outwards as the Nineteenth Century progressed. Where there had once been the fields of rural Middlesex there were now substantial villas and slightly less substantial terraces, provided for a new race of suburban Londoners. By the early 1880's most of Highgate had been physically linked to Hornsey, Upper Holloway and Crouch End by a "score of roads and groves".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the Archway Bridge and the early history of the area see Frederick Prickett's *The History and Antiquities of Highgate*, London 1842. See also Lloyd's *History of Highgate*, 1888.



Highgate had only become a separate parish in 1831 when St. Michael's had been built on the ridge of the hill. The village had formerly lain in the extensive parishes of St. Pancras, Hornsey and Islington, the boundaries of which are still marked by the division of the area into separate London Boroughs. In 1874 a new parish, that of All Saints, was formed marking the significant increase in the population. Within a few years, however, even All Saints with its 500 seatings could not cope with the influx of new residents and their spiritual needs.

## 2

Early in 1881 it became apparent that a new church would have to be built to serve the new houses along and around the Archway Road. Accordingly, the vicar of All Saints', Highgate, the Revd. Edgar Smith and his church-wardens entered into negotiations with the landowner, Mr. Cory-Wright, for the purchase of a site on the Winchester Hall Estate.<sup>2</sup> The land was obtained for £500, £300 of which was provided by the Bishop of London's Fund, the residuum being borrowed, without interest, from a friend of the vicar's. On March 23 1882 the parish resolved to remove its iron Schoolroom, already in use as such for twelve years, to the new site to serve as a temporary church, and to provide itself with a permanent schoolroom at a total cost of £630.

Eleven days earlier the first regular service for the mission had been held on the ground floor of a house in Northwood Road (No. 4), the Bishop of London having licensed the room for the celebration of the Holy Communion. On September 16 1882 the newly moved schoolroom, now designated a temporary church, was opened with the Bishop's license and formally dedicated by the Bishop of Colchester. Thus with borrowed money, a second-hand building, and some 120 worshippers St. Augustine's faithfully but unglamorously began its independent history.

<sup>2</sup> The Cory-Wright's were also the owners of Langdon Park, Wembury, Devonshire, hence the names of the new roads.  
Edgar Smith is commemorated in the statue of St. Augustine beneath the West Window.



Speculative building operations had continued apace and by the early part of 1884 the population of the area had grown to upwards of 3,500 and the Iron Church had become uncomfortably crowded. A new aisle had to be added at a cost of £51 and the expense borne by collections. It was obvious, however, that such temporary measures offered no lasting solution to local needs. On June 16 a Committee was formed, under Edgar Smith's chairmanship, to promote the plan to build a permanent structure and it was agreed to request the architect Charles H.M. Mileham, a Churchwarden from 1878-1881, to submit estimates of the probable cost of his existing designs.

Mileham had been responsible for the extensions and improvements to St. Michael's in 1878 and he had published a design for the proposed St. Augustine's in the *Building News* (November 24 1882). His original and distinctive design shows a spacious and aisle-less church, lit by large decorated windows, and clearly equipped for 'advanced' ceremonial. By July 1884, however, it had become obvious that Mileham's design and his estimate of £16,000 was too costly. The Committee rejected the plans agreeing instead to hold a limited competition for a church to cost half the original sum. It was later resolved to ask four architects to prepare schemes, and designs were submitted by Mileham, James Brooks, J.E.K. Cutts, and John Dando Sedding—an interesting choice for its date.

Brooks was already well known for his noble east London churches, St. Saviour's, Hoxton, and St. Columba's, and St. Chad's, Haggerston, all brick solutions to the problem of building appropriate, but economical, town churches. Cutts was only 36 and his originality, or rather his lack of it, was effectively unproven. Sedding was 45 and had been, until 1865 a pupil of G.E. Street, working predominantly in the West Country until he came back to London in 1875. He was already known for his work at St. Clement's, Bournemouth, and since his return to London he had come under the personal influence of Ruskin. From 1878 to 1881 he had been a sidesman and, in 1882, he had been appointed a churchwarden of St. Alban's, Holborn. The nature of his tastes in religion and art were thus never in doubt.

In November Brooks' scheme was rejected by the Committee as it had failed to comply with the written instructions. Some days later



Mileham's revised plans were also passed over and on November 15 it was agreed that Sedding would be employed. St. Augustine's is fortunate in its first architect even though the original designs were never fully realised. Sedding was at the beginning of that phase in his career which led to his late masterpieces, Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell and Holy Trinity, Chelsea; if St. Augustine's cannot be claimed to equal these two, it can at least be seen as a significant example of a transition from the rugged styles of the mid-Victorians to the more refined expression of the later part of the Nineteenth Century.

### 3

On January 30 1885 the *Building News* published two views of the proposed new church, commenting, without much evident enthusiasm, on its materials and dimensions:—

"For a church which is intended to hold over 700 persons the site was not too large and nearly the whole of the available space is covered by the building. Reference to the plan shows a nave and chancel 32 ft. wide with narrow aisles, a chapel to hold 100 persons on the north of the chancel, clergy vestry on the south of the sanctuary, a high stone screen at the east end, with an ambulatory behind. . . The ridge of the roof is 60 ft. from the ground line. The materials to be employed are stock brick and stone voussoirs to the arches. The Church has nine bays on each side and three corresponding bays at the east end".

Most of these details are still recognisable despite the vicissitudes of the church's subsequent fortunes. The red and yellow bricks and the stone dressings of the interior have long since been hidden under whitewash, but those of the exterior are original, if grubby, and they show how closely the church fitted into its urban brick surroundings.

In July 1885 the Bishop of London's Fund granted a further £400 towards the cost of construction and in September a limited number of tenders were invited from builders. The church was now estimated to cost £7,500 including lighting, heating and seating. With additional land purchased to the east of the site the entire cost was to amount to £8,150.



Services in the iron church continued unabated while subscriptions were solicited and money trickled in from the parish and beyond. A regular pattern of worship and parochial activity was already firmly established at the mission. On St. Augustine's Day 1886 the Annual Festival was kept with a Choral Communion at 8.30 a.m. followed by a picnic in Epping Forest, reached by railway from Upper Holloway. The day was pronounced "a decided success" by All Saints' Magazine.

The contract with the builders, Messrs. Stimpson & Co., was signed in March 1887, while the Building Committee debated with the architect the advisability of incorporating into the design a room under the raised chancel, at a further cost of £250. Excavation and fund-raising proceeded satisfactorily and on June 11 1887, the feast of St. Barnabas, the foundation stone was laid by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Highgate's most celebrated, and richest, resident.<sup>3</sup> A guard of honour and escort had been provided for the occasion by the 3rd. Middlesex Volunteer Corps. The Baroness was presented with the engraved silver trowel she had used (it had cost £3.5.0) and the ebony mallet (which had cost 9s.), and the ceremony concluded with a Garden Party.

By the end of the year the chancel and one bay of the nave had been completed and had been joined to the existing iron church which was now to function as a temporary nave. It was this ungainly structure which was consecrated by Dr. Temple, the Bishop of London, on February 4 1888. The Bishop also sang the first Mass in the new St. Augustine's. The second phase in the church's history was thus celebrated; the building was unfinished and the continual troubles over financing further work remained, but something of the church as we now know it was open for worship.

<sup>3</sup> Angela Burdett-Coutts (1814-1906) possessed of a vast fortune, proved one of the most generous philanthropists of her age. In his *Northern Heights of London* (1869) William Howitt commented, "I suppose no other woman under the rank of a queen ever did so much for the established church; had she done it for the catholic church she would undoubtedly be canonised as St. Angela". Baroness Burdett-Coutts had built and endowed St. Stephen's Rochester Row, but she was a strong Protestant and the Building Committee regretted that she was not more in sympathy with St. Augustine's. The Baroness eventually subscribed £50 to the Building Fund.



St. Augustine's remained an awkward combination of brick chancel and iron nave for a further five years. So far the work had cost the parish some £5,000 and only £500 was in hand to finish the remaining three quarters of the building. It was not until May 1893 that appeals for money allowed construction work to recommence. J.D. Sedding had died suddenly in 1891 and his practice had been taken over by his most talented pupil, Henry Wilson.<sup>4</sup> Wilson was responsible for the next important advance in the form of the church, the completion of the Lady Chapel according to the original designs. The Lady Chapel is the only part of the present church to remain substantially unaltered from this period; it was only slightly damaged in the fire of 1924, and later redecoration has tampered comparatively little with its original shape and fittings. The Reredos and pavement, designed by Sedding before his death, were provided for the chapel by the Revd. H.R. Cooper-Smith and his family in memory of his mother and her sisters. The metal screens on each side of the altar are probably to Wilson's designs. A canopy was added to the reredos in the 1930's.

At the same time excavations to the west slowly advanced the laying of foundations for the nave. A severe winter in 1893-4 delayed work and further strained the old iron building, now barely weatherproof. Further printed appeals were sent out in 1895 pleading

"In these days when thousands of pounds are freely and generously given elsewhere for Church purposes, is it too much to hope that the requisite help will come in this time of need for a parish which has, with much patient endurance, and with such devoted self-sacrifice, striven to build its own church?"

The appeal emphasises, quite justifiably, the degree to which St. Augustine's was built with money, mostly in small amounts, provided by local subscription, very much in the manner of many mediaeval churches. As such it remains the pious expression of the needs and hopes of a community.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson was also responsible for some of the finest fittings in Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, and for the superb internal work in St. Bartholomew's, Brighton.



By the end of 1895 the five remaining bays of the nave were completed to the point where Sedding's design had proposed to construct an arch and a western gallery. Costs had, however, been excessive, and a writ was issued by the Builder's solicitors for the balance of the amount owing. Fortunately for the Committee the matter was settled amicably, though with some evident embarrassment. Yet another printed appeal, of April 1897, urgently requested the necessary £900 needed to cover debts and to secure existing work. It informed those thus solicited that

"Our parish is by no means a wealthy one, though it cannot appeal 'ad misericordiam' like many parishes in the East End of London".

The state of parish finances, and the efforts to raise money, can perhaps be determined by considering the £97 obtained that same year by the 'Ladies Sale of Work'.

In December 1896 the nave was opened for congregational use though it was buttressed towards the Archway Road by heavy brick piers and its temporary wooden facade was weather-proofed with tiles and corrugated iron. It was to remain so for the ensuing seventeen years, though many parishioners were to complain of draughts strong enough to blow out candles at the back of the church.

## 5

The Church Commissioners formally accepted a scheme for the creation of a separate parish for St. Augustine's (it had remained part of All Saints') in December 1897. The district was confirmed as such by an Order in Council of March 7 1898, being formed chiefly out of All Saints' parish together with a portion from that of St. Michael's, the area containing about 5,000 residents. The first vicar was the Revd. Arthur W. Bradnack curate of All Saints' since 1892, and effectively in charge of the district since 1896.

In an interview published in *Church Bells and Illustrated Church News* (August 30 1901) Fr. Bradnack spoke of the social complexion of his new parish and congregation:—

"There are not any very poor, though there are people whose circumstances are such that, if anything happens,



they soon feel the pinch of poverty. The working-class element includes artisans, milk-carriers, and labourers employed by the district Council. There are a few large houses in Shepherd's Hill Road and in Hornsey Lane; but most of the residents in Hornsey Land had settled down to Christ Church, Crouch End, before St. Augustine's was opened. We have a considerable number of civil servants, but financially, it has been a struggle the whole time".

The new vicar had a church council of about forty members, a curate, Fr. Edward Barnicoat, and an impressive pattern of services by which "a good many Dissenters" had been struck and had consequently offered themselves as candidates for Confirmation. When asked about Ritual in his church Fr. Bradnack's reply was careful, but it gives an interesting picture of contemporary worship. Services were

"fair, but not fancy. Both the priest and deacon wear vestments at Choral Celebrations. All the services are uniform; we do not change. There is a celebration once a month at 10 on Sunday, and every Sunday there are celebrations at 7, 8 and 11.25 a.m.; also daily at 7 a.m. . . The service is not at all elaborate. My opinion is that, when a man comes to church with a Prayerbook in his hand, he ought to know what is being done".

The fittings of the church, apart from those in the Lady Chapel and the Altar slab, were all of a temporary nature. The chancel remained simply a wooden platform and the church floor was bare concrete.

January 1901 had, however, seen the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone of the new vicarage by Mrs. Edgar Smith while the Bishop of London came again to give his blessing. The vicarage was designed by J.S. Alder an architect and one of the churchwardens; sufficient funds for the completion of the undertaking were still lacking, despite Mr. Alder's "remarkable power of making the best of everything" on which the Parish Magazine saw fit to comment. In this same January St. Augustine's marked the passing of Queen Victoria. There were good congregations at all the memorial services for which the Choir and Sanctuary had been draped with Union Jacks.



In 1904 it was decided to embark upon a scheme to construct a Parish Hall in order to provide more room for the now extensive social activities sponsored by the church. The rooms provided under the sanctuary were now too constricted to accommodate 'Social Evenings' every Tuesday and church societies as diverse as the Bible Class for Men, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Mothers Union, the Highgate Maternity Society, the Cricket Club, the Football Club and the Lawn Tennis Club. The new Hall was also designed by J.S. Alder and opened by the Bishop of Islington in the summer of 1905. The construction of the Hall on its present site marked the abandonment of a plan to extend the church by building a new chancel to the east, leaving Sedding's work as the nave, and raising the new chancel over a sunken parish room.

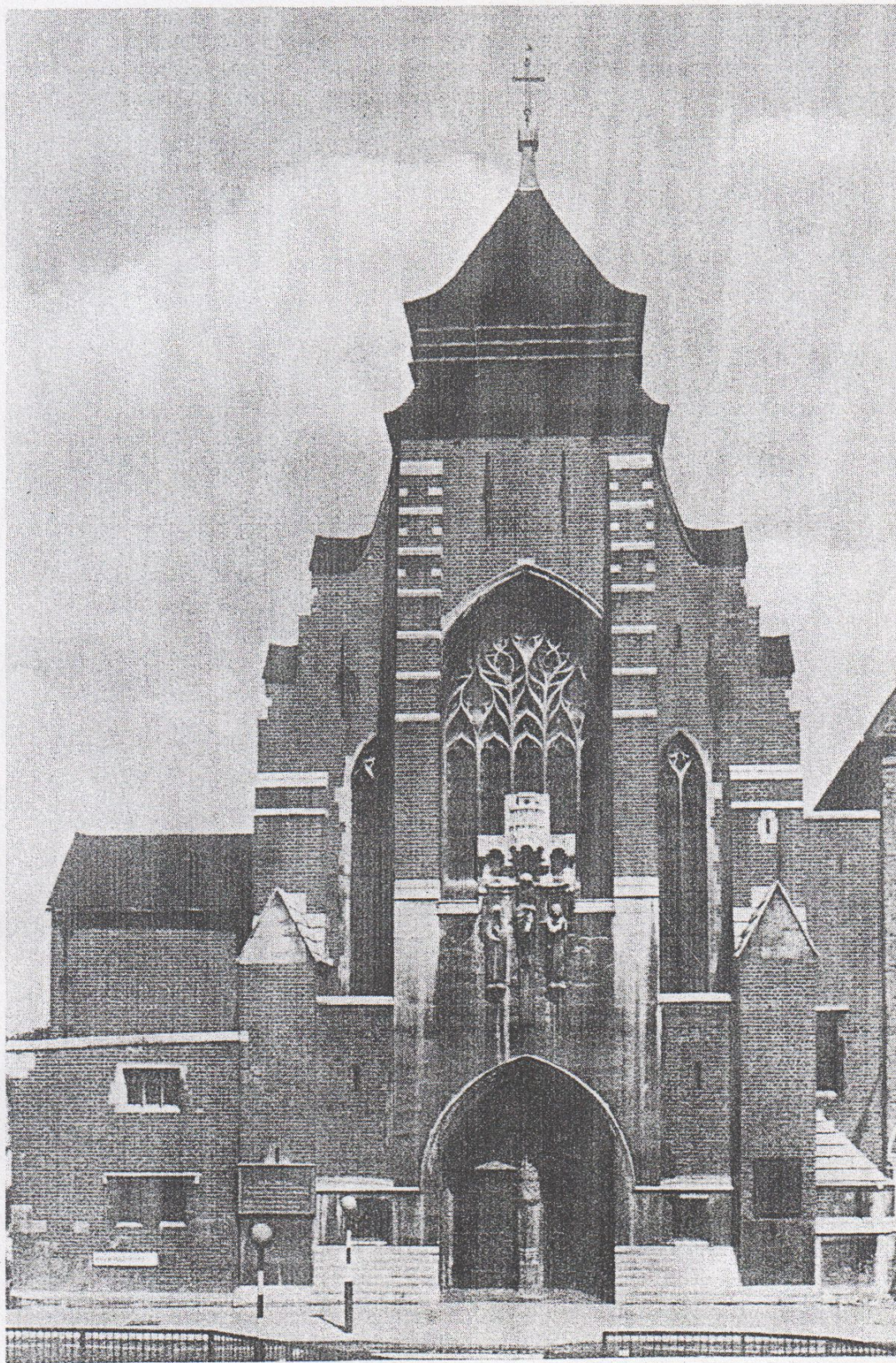
Fr. Bradnack had been drained by his continual service to St. Augustine's by fund-raising as much as by his active supervision and inspiration of the spiritual life of the new parish. As a consequence, feeling that it was time to hand over to another, he exchanged livings in 1907 with the Revd. C.G.T. Maturin, vicar of Amcotts in Lincolnshire. He remained at Amcotts until 1910 when he went to Morton near Gainsborough. He died in 1931.

## 6

Charles Gabriel Trewman Maturin, ordained deacon in 1869 and priest in 1870, and worked for eleven years as an assistant priest at St. Barnabas, Pimlico before serving at Amcotts for a further eighteen years. He came to St. Augustine's to find a debt of about £400 on the Parish Hall and his new church still unfinished. At his induction service the Bishop of Islington had spoken of the great object of completing the building, and with considerable energy, and a gift for fund-raising unequalled even in his long-suffering predecessors, Fr. Maturin succeeded not only in quickly clearing the outstanding debt but also in raising between £6,000 and £7,000 over a period of years.

On January 7 1910 a meeting of the Church Council accepted the vicar's scheme to raise sufficient money to complete the west end, build clergy vestries, put down a wooden floor, provide a new pulpit and organ, and have permanent fittings in the chancel. In February

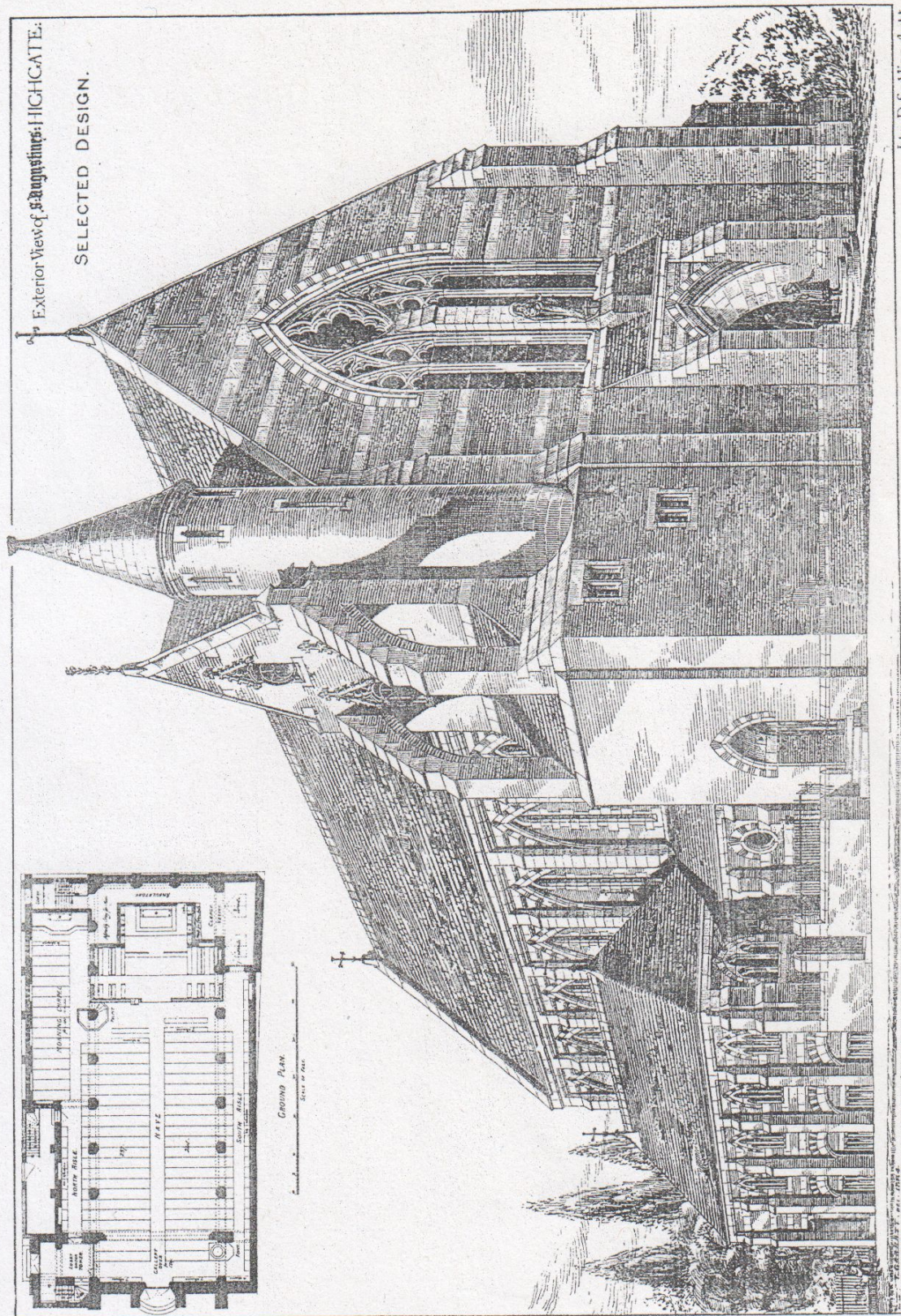






Exterior View of *St. Augustine's* HIGHGATE.

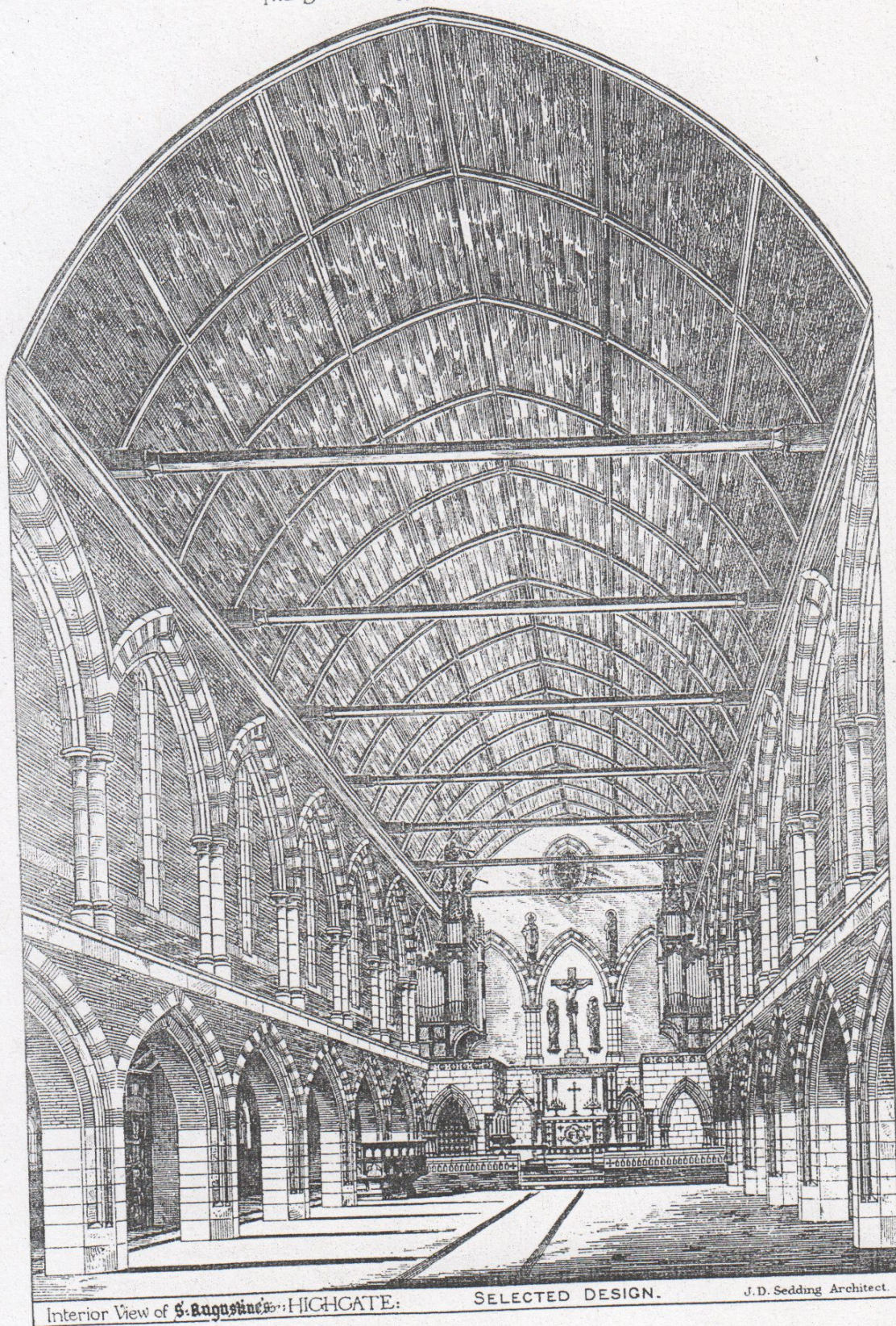
SELECTED DESIGN.



John D. Sedding Archt



THE BUILDING NEWS, JAN. 30. 1835.

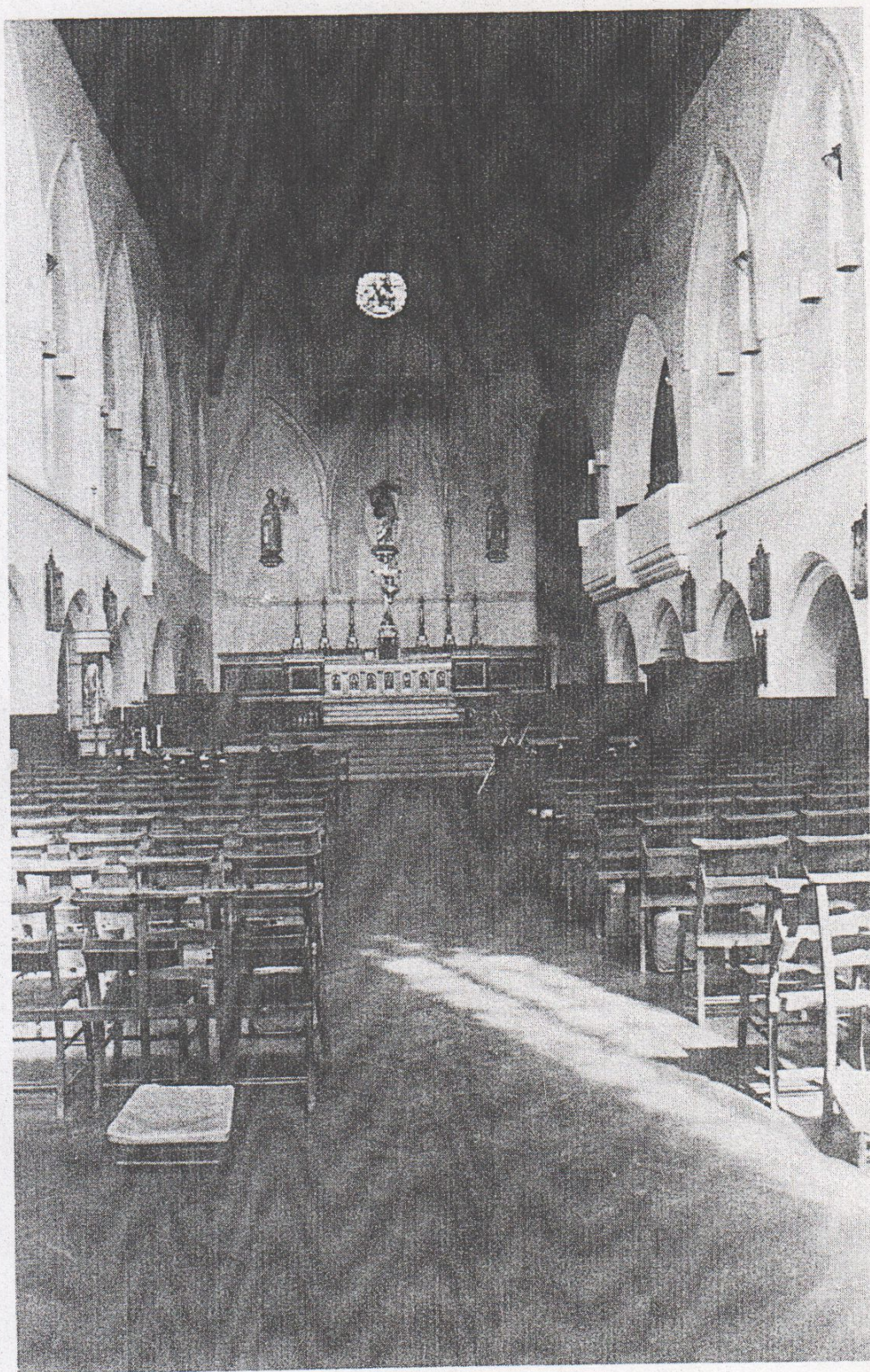


Interior View of *S. Augustine's*, HIGHGATE:

SELECTED DESIGN.

J. D. Sedding Architect.







the vicar approached J. Harold Gibbons, who had recently done some work at St. Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, and Edward Goldie, who had worked with his architect-father at St. James', Spanish Place, requesting both to submit schemes. Gibbons' plan was accepted, with minor alterations, on June 3, and by the following January £2,273.1.3d. had been collected or promised towards the work. Most of this sum had come from Ecclesiastical grants, but there had already been considerable private subscription and £50 had come as profits from the vicar's series of 'Bethlehem Tableaux' which had proved a popular success, for nothing like them had been seen in North London before. It was at the same time, proposed that the new work should form part of a memorial to Lord Armstrong of Elswich and Captain Blakely, R.A., joint but disputed inventors of the 'Armstrong Gun'. Two marble statues were to be placed in the Church. A Faculty was applied for in February 1912, but nothing came of the plan.

J. Harold Gibbons published a sketchy perspective of his design for the west front in the *Building News* in January 1912; comparatively few alterations were made to the scheme as work proceeded. The change from Sedding's original facade is quite dramatic; the ground plan is similar to that of the 1884 design, with a prominent west window and door, and a two-storied porch to the north-west. Gibbons has, however, shifted the bell-tower to a central position and has heightened it, thus achieving a different massing. The design, for both the interior and the exterior, shows the impact of the church architecture of its time with its freer and more experimental use of Gothic motifs. The vertical is considerably stressed, and a sense of height is achieved through the use of stark buttressing and sheer stone piers. The church is generally entered through a porch opening into a western transept or narthex; Sedding and Wilson's nave is reached by descending three steps. Here, rather than at the blank east end is the major source of light in the building, with windows, containing fine Decorated tracery, to the west and north. Gibbons' design is an undoubted success for it both radically moves away from the mood of the original and yet harmonises with it. In none of his later churches does he show himself such a master of space and light.<sup>5</sup>

By January 1913 the building fund had risen to £4,050 and building operations commenced in the April of that year. A Bishop's License



was granted for the Parish Hall to be used for services while the church was unusable. Work on the remodelling of the interior began early in 1914 and was virtually finished by Easter.

The completed building was dedicated by the Bishop of London on Saturday, June 20. The east end was now raised and panelled, new oak stalls for the choir and clergy had been fitted and the High Altar was provided with a wooden tabernacle and a rich, but somewhat awkward, panelled reredos. The day of the Dedication was memorable not simply for its ecclesiastical ceremonial for it was enlivened by a number of Protestant demonstrators who objected especially to the life-size stone Calvary which adorns the west front. To quote the *Hornsey Journal*, recording the incident some years later:—

"The agitators further objected to the teachings and practice of the church, but their efforts and speeches were summarily dismissed by the Boy Scouts, who moved from pitch to pitch and drowned the denunciations, while a lady of the congregation was alleged by the agitators to have endeavoured to overthrow the rostrum of the speaker".

Some anxiety was also aroused by the threat of a demonstration in church by militant suffragettes. Several "suspicious looking women" were refused admission and no further disruption took place, excepting a power-failure which put the new organ out of action.

Within two months of the Dedication Great Britain was at War with the Central Powers. St. Augustine's suffered the same disturbance of its parish activities as any other English parish, though services continued faithfully. A memorial altar under the great crucifix at the west end was dedicated to the nineteen men who died in the War. Miraculously this memorial was to survive the church's own holocaust without damage.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbons (1878-1958) had been articled to the Manchester architect Thomas Worthington and later to Temple Moore, whose influence can certainly be felt at St. Augustine's. His work was principally concerned with church restoration, but after the Great War he built several suburban churches notably St. Mary's, Kenton, Middlesex in 1936.

Gibbons redrew his elevation of the west front of St. Augustine's in 1928 (the original having perhaps been destroyed in the fire) he was evidently satisfied with his work. This drawing is in the R.I.B.A. COLLECTION.



Fr. Maturin resigned his living in 1919 and went as Warden to the Highgate House of Mercy. He died in 1922 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery. St. Augustine's owes him a lasting debt of gratitude and honour. He was succeeded by the Revd. Alfred Charles Bridge who had served for twenty-three years at St. Martin's Mission Church, North Kensington where he was well-known as one of the untiring slum-priests of his generation.

Fr. Bridge's incumbancy is memorable for the very survival of church life despite the very worst of disasters. In the early hours of Friday January 11 1924 the vicar was awakened with the news that his church was ablaze. Attempts were made to rescue all that could be saved, but flames and smoke made it impossible for much to be done. Even Fr. Bridge's brave struggle to bring out the ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament had to be abandoned. Flames completely enveloped the east end of the building, spreading along the roof and aisles to damage the bell-tower.

"The interior is a mass of debris from which the water was streaming at nine o'clock this morning: 'Do this in remembrance of Me' is still readable at the side of what was the altar, otherwise church adornments and figures have been utterly destroyed or irretrievably damaged."

So wrote the *Hornsey Journal* on the following morning. The pulpit which had been erected a few weeks previously in memory of Fr. Maturin had been considerably damaged, though some of the panels which remained unscathed were eventually incorporated in its successor which is still in use. Of the High Altar only charred wood-work remained amidst a mass of burnt and fallen beams from the roof. Extraordinarily, one of the firemen found the Tabernacle, barely recognisable after its ordeal, on the floor. On forcing the door open Fr. Bridge found the ciborium intact, if still hot, and the Blessed Sacrament unharmed.

The damage proved grievous, for not only had the main body of the church been gutted and all its furnishings destroyed, but the parish had also lost all its vestments, its altar linen, banners, its organ and



many of its records. From the evidence of photographs taken after the fire it is surprising that the north aisle and Lady Chapel, the font and the War Memorial had been preserved.

8

Thanks to the determination and energy of Fr. Bridge the work of reconstruction was begun almost immediately. Much of the necessary capital came from the Insurance Company, but the first of the private subscribers to the restoration fund was the Revd. S.G. Morris, the Minister of Upper Holloway Baptist Church, who lived in the Parish.

Injury to the actual fabric of the church had been extensive, but the brick walls and piers had withstood the heat sufficiently to be reparable. J. Harold Gibbons was again called upon and submitted his estimate to the vicar and churchwardens in April 1924. The only important structural alteration to be made was the creation of a new and more spacious Organ Gallery by replacing three bays of Sedding's arcade with two broader stone arches to the chancel. Despite the extent of the work involved the church was ready for rededication on Monday October 19 1925.

For the second time in his Episcopate Bishop Winnington-Ingram came to consecrate St. Augustine's, finding it acceptable in 1925 to be vested in cope and mitre for the ceremony. In spite of pouring rain more than a thousand people had assembled, the church being full to capacity three quarters of an hour before the time of the service. This time there was no sign of a hostile demonstration. Fr. Bridge sang the first High Mass at 6.30 a.m. on the Tuesday following at the new marble altar decked with its ten candlesticks and the Tabernacle, said, by the *Church Times*, to have been brought from Italy by the architect.

The strain of these eventful years had exhausted Fr. Bridge who died peacefully in the Vicarage on September 16 1926. The funeral service was conducted by the Bishop of Willesden and the procession to Highgate Cemetery was followed by some hundred mourners including a considerable number of vested clerical colleagues.



In February 1927 it was announced that the new vicar was to be the Revd. John Henry Hodgson A.K.C., then priest of St. George's, Paris and formerly a curate at St. Augustine's, Kilburn. The priest-in-charge, Fr. F.H. Williams, told the *Hornsey Journal* (February 25 1927) that the new vicar was "an absolute Catholic" who had "a most charming manner with him which would even disarm Mephistopheles". The Parochial Church Council had already expressed its delight at the appointment. Fr. Hodgson was instituted and inducted by the Archdeacon of Hampstead and the Bishop of Willesden on April 29, on which occasion the Bishop saw fit to preach in support of the proposed new Prayer Book.

During his twenty-five year incumbancy Fr. Hodgson did much to develop the musical life of St. Augustine's and was instrumental in adding many of the church's present fittings, indeed he can be credited with creating much of its atmosphere. He was the first vicar to be able to feel free from the financial worries of construction and reconstruction. In 1933, the year of the great Centenary Congress, the Altar of St. Joseph was set up in the north aisle. Its gilded frontal was carved by a member of the congregation, Alfred Jenn, while its Baroque candlesticks are Spanish, the crucifix being carved to match. The ivory figure is said to have been purchased for 5/- in the Caledonian Market. The statue of St. Joseph is Bavarian, but it was coloured in England. The stone Virgin and Child was added to the west front as a memorial to Dr. Woodward, priest and musical scholar, who died in Highgate in 1934.

1938 marked the Jubilee of the first consecration and the event was celebrated by a commission to Adrian Gilbert Scott for a design for a new High Altar and reredos. The original conception included an immense classical reredos, covering most of the east wall and obscuring Sedding's Gothic arcading. A great crucifix, suspended in the centre of the composition, would have dominated the church, hanging over a Renaissance style throne for exposition. The only portion of the memorial completed is the altar and the fine panelling behind it (intended to form the base of the reredos). The altar itself is of gilded lime-wood, burnished at the high points, and carved by M. Linthout of Bruges. The seven panels at the front contain figures of SS. Thomas Aquinas, Jerome, Cyprian, Bede, Augustine of Hippo and Dominic, the central panel has a representation of the pelican in its piety, a symbol of Christ in the Sacrament.



The altar was unveiled and blessed by the Bishop of London (the now 80 year old Winnington-Ingram) on February 4 1938, the ceremony being followed by Solemn Evensong and a processional *Te Deum*. The preacher at the High Mass on the following Sunday was the Revd. E.D. Sedding S.S.J.E., the only surviving son of the original architect.

The Jubilee was celebrated on a less elevated level by a fancy-dress ball in the Parish Hall, the music for the occasion being provided by a Church Lads Brigade Band.

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As with the completion of the first High Altar the church did not long enjoy peace outside its walls. The War of 1939-45 fortunately left the church fabric unscathed. There was no break in daily Masses, though for a time Sunday evening services had to be abandoned, Compline being said in the afternoons during the worst periods of bombing. The carved panel of St. George and the Dragon in the south aisle forms the church's War Memorial.

Fr. Hodgson retired to Broadstairs in May 1952. Perhaps his contribution to the physical well-being of St. Augustine's was best honoured by the statement by Fr. Harold Riley, then secretary of the Church Union, that St. Augustine's was the "best equipped church in the Diocese of London".

The Revd. Gerald O'Connell FitzGerald M.A., came to the living from a chaplaincy in Malta. Two public events particularly mark his incumbancy, the first of which demonstrates a sudden, and prophetic, lurch into the post-War world. In October 1957 St. Augustine's appeared on B.B.C. Television as the setting for Fr. Geoffrey Beaumont's 'Twentieth Century Folk Mass'. The vicar celebrated, facing the congregation, and accompanied by a twenty-five piece orchestra, including trumpets, drums and a saxophone. Following the broadcast Fr. FitzGerald was deluged with mail, mostly congratulatory, although one caller shouted "You are a fiend from Hell" when he answered the telephone. The press certainly took due note, and at no point in its history has the church been so much in the public eye even though the regular congregation, understandably,



seemed a little bewildered by what had come upon them. In the light of subsequent changes perhaps the most extraordinary criticism of the experiment came from the *Catholic Herald* which wrote:—

"The Anglican minister, favouring evidently modern ideas on liturgy, faced his congregation. . . Some of the actions he performed were reminiscent of those of the celebrant at a Catholic Mass. . . But the joy of the syncopated music. . . struck me at least as a demonstration of the fact that the creator of this amazing musical novelty had captured the essence of thanksgiving and praise. Thank heavens there are different ways of expressing this."

Shortly before his retirement in 1970 Fr. FitzGerald was once again the central figure in a church drama. As Highgate's contribution to the Celebrations of the 800 Anniversary of the martyrdom of Thomas a Becket, the Vicar played the part of Thomas in four performances of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, produced with an ecumenical cast in St. Augustine's. Thus the church's dramatic tradition, dating back to Fr. Maturin's 'Bethlehem Tableaux', was fittingly extended, and the links with Centerbury, through our Patron, was emphasised.

During this period two further prominent fittings were added. At Whitsun 1958 three figures, designed by Henry Farmer and representing the Risen Christ, St. Gregory and St. Augustine, were placed in the blank arcade above the High Altar together with a new canopy. They were presented by Douglas Smith, who had already proved himself a most generous benefactor to the church, and were intended as an appropriate substitute for the incomplete reredos. It is interesting to observe that in Sedding's drawing of the interior of 1885 it had originally been proposed to decorate the east wall with a rood and figures of Our Lady and St. John with two further saints above them. Thus in some sense, the designs for the sanctuary show a return to an earlier intention. A quasi-baroque shrine containing a carved and coloured statue of Our Lady was set up in the eastern part of the nave in 1962. It was designed by Laurence King and is representative of his style. It was given by Fr. Hodgson in memory of his sister.

Fr. FitzGerald retired on the eve of the Feast of the Circumcision in



1970. His successor is the Revd. Clifford Graham Doyle A.K.C., who was instituted on October 13 1971. The church was redecorated thanks to the efforts of its congregation in 1973. 1975 marks the Jubilee of the re-Dedication following the fire of 1924 and St. Augustine's can reflect on a history of misfortune as much as triumph in the face of adversity. According to Bede's *History of the English Church and People* Pope Gregory advised his questioning Archbishop, Augustine, that "things should not be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things". This advice remains fitting as we look forward to the next phase in the history of the church.



## THE ORGANS OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S

The first organ in St. Augustine's was a small two manual, there are no details available about this instrument.

Alfred Hunter and Sons, Organ Builders, 87, High Street, Clapham, S.W.4. were the builders of both the later organs. Hunter enjoyed a high reputation for the production of fine organs. Several were built for churches in Clapham and elsewhere. The largest is in the church of St. James', Spanish Place, another particularly fine one is in the church of St. Andrew's, Worthing.

The organ of 1914, consisted of three manuals, forty two speaking stops and ten couplers. Alfred Hunter is reputed to have said of this organ, "The finest I have ever built". It was completely destroyed in the fire of 1924.

The present organ was built in 1925-6, and completed about six months after the rededication of the church. On the Sunday following the rededication at the High Mass, Mozart's Mass in B flat was sung by the choir to an accompaniment of harmonium, string orchestra and woodwind, all were housed in the empty organ loft. Mr. Denchfield, then organist, conducted and Mr. James played the harmonium. Mr. James was subsequently destined to be organist of the church for many years, maintaining a standard of music that was famous for many miles around.

The organ was dedicated by the Bishop of Willesden (Bishop Perrin) on a weekday afternoon at 5 p.m. The church was very full on this occasion. Mr. James played the first Movement of Guilmant's third organ Sonata as a concluding voluntary.

The organ was never completed, many of the stops were prepared for. Some stops were completed by Noel Mander in 1958. We are fortunate in having the organ maintained and looked after by Mr. Mander—the firm which is at present engaged on a complete rebuild of the organ in St. Paul's Cathedral.



**Specification of organ built by Alfred Hunter  
in 1914 and destroyed by fire in 1924**

**GREAT ORGAN**

Double open diapason	16
Open diapason	8
Open diapason	8
Open diapason	8
Wald flute	8
Principal	4
Hohl flute	4
Twelfth	2.2/3
Fifteenth	2
Trumpet	8

Choir to Great	16
Choir to Great	
Swell to Great	
5 pistons	

**CHOIR ORGAN**

Quintaton	16
Harmonic flute	8
Viol d'orchestre	8
Lieblich gedeckt	8
Dulciana	8
Unda maris	8
Flauto traverso	4
Piccolo	2
Clarinet	8

Swell to Choir

5 pistons

Pneumatic action

**SWELL ORGAN**

Double diapason	16
Open diapason	8
Stopped diapason	8
Salicional	8
Gamba	8
Voix celeste	8
Principal	4
Flute	4
Fifteenth	2
Mixture	3 ranks
Contra fagotto	16
Cornopean	8
Oboe	8
Clarion	4
Tremulant	
Octave	
Suboctave	
5 pistons	

**PEDAL ORGAN**

Open diapason	16
Violone	16
Bourdon	16
Lieblich bourdon	16
Quint	10.2/3
Octave	8
Bass flute	8
Trombone	16
Tromba	8

Choir to Pedal

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

4 pistons (toe)



Specification of organ build by Alfred Hunter  
in 1925-6, with a number of stops prepared for, and some completed  
by N.P. Mander in 1958

### GREAT ORGAN

Double open diapason	16
Lieblich gedeckt	8 M
Flute	4 M
Open diapason	8
Open diapason	8
Principal	4
Twelfth	2.2/3 M
Fifteenth	2 M
Trumpet	8 P

### CHOIR ORGAN

Viola da gamba	8 P
Lieblich gedeckt	8 P
Dulciana	8
Unda maris	8 P
Piccolo	2 P
Clarinet	8 P
Tremulant	P

### COUPLERS

Great to Pedal  
Swell to Pedal  
Choir to Pedal  
Swell to Great  
Swell octave  
Swell sub-octave  
Swell to Choir  
Choir octave  
Choir sub-octave  
Choir to Great  
Pedals to Great Pistons

Pneumatic action

(Stops marked "P" are prepared for, stops marked "M" inserted by Mander)

### SWELL ORGAN

Echo gamba	8
Voix celestes	8
Stopped diapason	8
Flauto traverso	4
Geigen	8
Gemshorn	4
Fifteenth	2 M
Harmonics	3 ranks
Oboe	8
Tremulant	
Contra fagotto	16 M
Cornopean	8

### PEDAL ORGAN

Open diapason	16
Violone	16
Bourdon	16
Bass flute	8
Octave diapason	8
Trombone	16 P

### ACCESSORIES

Five thumb pistons to Great  
Five thumb pistons to Swell  
Five thumb pistons to Choir  
Swell to Great reversible piston  
Great to Pedal reversible piston  
Five toe pistons to Pedal  
Great to Pedal reversible toe piston  
One toe piston reducing Swell and Pedal to piano



## VICARS OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S

1898-1907  
1907-1919  
1919-1926  
1927-1952  
1952-1970  
1971

Revd. A.W. Bradnack  
Revd. C.G.T. Maturin  
Revd. A.C. Bridge  
Revd. J.H. Hodgson  
Revd. G.O'C. FitzGerald  
Revd. C.G. Doyle

## ASSISTANT PRIESTS

1898-1901  
1901-1904  
1904-  
1904  
1905  
1908-1910  
1911-1912  
1913-1924  
1924-1937  
1927-1928  
1931-1944  
1937-1944  
1944-1948  
1948-1952  
1952-1954  
1956-1960

Revd. E.C. Barnicoat  
Revd. E.D. Elam  
Revd. J.L.V.B. Joyce  
Revd. F.B. Norrie  
Revd. C.S. Selby-Hall  
Revd. S.H. Rutherford  
Revd. L. Jickling  
Revd. C. Story  
Revd. F.H. Williams  
Revd. H. Schofield  
Revd. R.H. Lunn  
Revd. R.H. Pilkington  
Revd. W.E.C. Dyke  
Revd. E. Newman-Walters  
Revd. D.B. Cumming  
Revd. H.F. Capener